

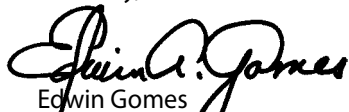
Dear Neighbor,

I want to bring you up to date on initiatives and legislative accomplishments from the recently concluded special sessions. You will find this information summarized in my newsletter, and I hope that you will take a moment to read through it.

In recent years, the work of the General Assembly has not been limited to the constitutionally established regular session. Much work is accomplished during special sessions. While the legislature is designed to be a part-time institution, many legislators work overtime to ensure that we meet our responsibilities and your expectations.

Please contact me any time to voice your opinions on the critical issues facing our state. I look forward to discussing these and other issues with you.

Sincerely,


Edwin Gomes
State Senator, 23rd District



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YOUR STATE SENATOR **ED GOMES**

2005 SPECIAL SESSIONS

Since I was sworn in as your new state Senator in November, we met in special sessions to target critical issues affecting healthcare coverage, energy and public safety. Legislation was passed on the following issues:



Healthcare Benefits: ConnPACE and Medicare Part D

Many seniors who take advantage of Connecticut's excellent prescription drug program, ConnPACE, and certain Medicaid recipients, are concerned about coverage gaps now that Medicare Part D has taken effect. Recently passed legislation ensures that these individuals will continue to receive comprehensive coverage at no additional cost. The CHOICES Program provides information and can answer questions about changes to Medicare Part D. The program's toll-free phone number is 1-800-994-9422.

Energy Assistance

With record energy prices expected this winter, a bill was approved to help low- and moderate-income families cope with rising costs of energy. The energy assistance bill: 1) increases benefits for eligible households; 2) provides new funding under the Contingency Heating Assistance Program; and 3) applies a sales tax exemption from November 25, 2005–April 1, 2006 on certain weatherization products, including furnaces. For more information, contact the Department of Social Services at **1-800-842-1132**.



HUSKY for Children

It was imperative that the General Assembly take action once the Department of Social Services announced that 2,200 children would lose coverage from the HUSKY health insurance program because their families could not afford the increase in premiums. The bill we passed restored funding to the state budget, thereby preventing higher premiums from taking effect.

Campaign Finance Reform

I am proud to report to you that we recently enacted landmark campaign finance reform legislation that is regarded as the strongest in the country. The new act provides for public financing of campaigns at the state level beginning with the 2008 election for legislative offices and the 2010 election for statewide elected offices. This act bans lobbyist and state contractor contributions to candidates for state offices and will severely limit the influence of special interests.